From the Cinder Pit

to

The Yard Office

or

Railroading from Hell to Breakfast

by

W. E. WING

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INTRODUCTION

The activities of the mechanical department of a modern railway always seemed to me to carry the spirit of transportation into our imagination just a little more than any other.

Let us stand in the twilight of an early winter evening and look out into the circle in the center of a great round house where the turn-table with its green and red lights stands motionless.

The bright lights from the roof of the house seem small and far away in the monstrous shadows cast by the smoky supporting beams.

The distant roar of a W-3 type engine hooked up to the house blower in the fourth section suggests an extra. Against this distant roar the silence around the drop pits in the first section is most uncanny.

Snow is falling lightly outside and here and there a section hand hacks at the ice in some switch, a solitary lonely figure in the vast expanse of the yard outside.

The lights from the engineer's locker room and call boy's office shine out on the slippery tracks. A supply boy loaded down with oil cans and a cushion under his arm swings himself onto one of the quiet giants standing silently on track three.

Away down under the towering timbers of the coal dock a dynamo gives its siren-like howl and a headlight splits the darkness—a bell rings for the hostler is bringing one up to be killed and inspected according to rules.

In its glare we see the pit cleaner busy shoveling out the cinder pit.

Across the tracks to the west the lights of the yard office gleam brightly and the semaphore on the roof changes color.

Another act in the endless, deathless drama of railroading is about to begin.

This is not a work of any literary merit, I am aware.

It is to be an attempt at recording the passing of an epoch—the age of the iron horse.

It is respectfully dedicated to the memory of two men, my grandfather, Webster Eaton of Lincoln, Neb. — a pioneer newspaper man, and to my father-in-law, Fred Maxon of Waukesha, Wis., who started in the "Link and Pin" days on the old Wisconsin Central.

I would like to feel that I have their approval

"The Semaphore"

Straight — silent — symbolical

I stand with my arms to the sky.

Guarding the lines with my lowered signs

As the thundering trains roll by.

These men who work on rail roads cannot all be grouped together in any place but in a book like this. Their work is different — their ideas go with the job they happen to hold.

Yet, to me, the over all picture — the final result is so important, so far-reaching that I have here tried to give you as much of a picture as I could vision from the round house windows.

But I hope these men will understand —

The fellow out along the main line in the heat of summer and the snows of winter swinging a track maul.

The signal maintenance men.

The bridge and building gang.

The clerks in the freight office and the truckers in the nearby freight shed.

The clerks in the Super's office sending out orders and checking passes.

The dressed-up passenger agents selling tickets.

The conductors and engineers trying to figure out changes in rules and please the public at the same time.

The car shop gang out in the yards in icy weather packing boxes and changing brasses.

The lonely tower men who are never noticed until they call them in to give them hell.

The special agents and car checkers.

The round house men, machinists, boiler makers, blacksmiths and pipe fitters.

And all the other thousands of men who play their part in the maintenance and operation of the nation's railroads.

I hope they will understand and in some measure appreciate what I have tried to do here.

MACHINIST

The bolts on the guide bar are twisted
The wrist pin is as loose as all hell
The number two saddle would like to skeedaddle
Shall we put a new rope on the bell

When the snow is coming down fiercely
When the wind is blowing a gale
When it's as cold there outside as a loan shark's
mean hide
We have never known it to fail

Just when your engines been spotted
And the bolts on the back end are loose
That the boss will appear and give this Bronx cheer
"Outside boys, I've just got the news

An engine is ready to travel
But the dynamo's loose on the shaft
The cylinders leak and the eccentrics sure squeak
And the blower gives us no draft."

So, out to the cripple we hasten
Burdened down with wrenches and tools
And we slop in the snow and we trip over hoes
For we're nothing but hard-working fools.

THE FABLE

of

The Man Who Believed in Santa Claus

Once upon a time there was a large, overgrown, homely citizen who spent eight hours a day in the employe of a large railroad company.

He was perfectly normal in every way except for an over dose of ambition.

He worked, he connived, he worried, he sweated and he plotted to get ahead.

He spent three thousand dollars more than he should in buying a home in a fashionable district so he could be neighbors to one of the supervisors.

He joined all the social and fraternal societies where there would be the slightest opportunity to rub elbows with an occasional higher-up.

He stuck his long nose in to all situations where he could play to the gallery — he squealed and he stooled.

No position was ever bulletined that he was not the first to have his application in.

But promotion never came.

On the same day that his wife absent-mindedly plucked two grey hairs off his skull a prize job was bulletined.

He rushed to put his application in and waited.

After two weeks of mental torture he timidly asked his superiors who had gotten the job.

They replied, "Oh, a half-witted guy from Dakota who married some relation of one of the directors got it — he's not a railroad man — he was studying embalming in college and flunked out — they had to take care of him.

Moral

Don't climb the ladder of success without first putting a pillow in the seat of your pants.

OFF THE MAIN LINE

Murphy read the order
As Olson gave her the gun
Pulling out of the junction
At the half-way point in their run.

Murphy remarked to Olson,
"For Pete's sake look at this —
Next thing we'll go in the hole for
Will be a one-eyed dispatcher's kiss!"

They read the order together
Their eyes popping out of their heads.
It burned itself into their memories.
And this is what it said.

'A prize mule is waiting at Milltown
To go by express to the yard.
Be sure and get him on safely
And his limbs and his health you must guard!

As they pulled up to the platform at Milltown
The conductor swung himself off.
The mule was the center of attraction.
Switching flies as he drank from a trough.

They turned his head to the gangplank
As Olson looked at his watch.
They gave a jerk at his halter
As the agent lifted the latch.

But, the mule had reached a decision.
He would stay right where he was at.
The crew was getting impatient
As Murphy scratched under his hat.

He seemed to be thinking intently
As his fingers reached for a plank.
The brakeman glanced at his timepiece,
As the agent looked down the tank.

Olson grabbed for the lumber.
He got a good grip on the club.
The animal looked at him mildly
With a sneer that was plainly a snub.

The crowd was silent and breathless
As Olson swung from the ground.
A pin dropped from the heighth of a chair top
Would have made an ominous sound.

The plank hit the mule on the rudder.
The beast seemed to shiver and start.
His ears pointed straight to the heavens
As he let a tremendous fart.

He galloped straight up the gang plank
And disappeared into the car.
A cheer went up from the watchers
That was heard very plain from afar.

As they pulled out over the trestle
And the lights faded over the ridge
As Olson built up his fire
Old Murphy spit on the bridge.

Murphy remarked to Olson,
"By God — we've a minute to spare
I'd have put that brute in the car myself
If I'd thought to release the air."

WEWing.

FABLE

of

The Penurious Supervisor

Once upon a time there was a push of a railroad terminal who was nuts on economy.

Nothing was too small for him to peel down, pare off or eliminate altogether.

His own pay check was the only exception.

In two weeks time after taking charge he had the wipers running from engine to engine and all the boys were taking to the deep corners for their hay.

One bright morning as he was busily engaged in peeking between the spokes of locomotive wheels to see who was hiding in the pits to avoid their next slip he heard a mechanic say to his helper, "I should jack her up but the old man is due any minute now and I can't work until after he has gone by."

Rumor has it that this particular thorn on the rose bush of company authority no longer prowls the round house trails on a give schedule but now sits in his office and gets his information from other sources.

MORAL

No self-respecting mouse would eat cheese in front of a cat anyway.

THE INVESTIGATION

The brakeman on five-twenty-two
Was up on the carpet for fair
Had he hit up the run to be so damned dumb
For the brass hats were sure in his hair

His first time up on a fast one
(His regular run was time freight)
He'd brought down the wrath of an old cat
named McGrath
And her husky-ill-tempered Scotch mate

The Super glared at the culprit
As he cleared his throat with a growl
'It's been reported to me with great accuracy
That you've caused a complaint and a howl'

The griever hit the gaboon
With a chew that struck with a thud
'My client reports as he stutters and snorts
That the rule book is right in his blood'

The big boss looked over his glasses
As he said in a voice tinged with scorn
'You're dumb but you're daring—you son of a herring
And I sure wish you'd never been born'

"Where in the hell in the rule book
The regulations and laws
Can you find an excuse — you great hulking moose
For a trick for which there's no cause?"

"I was coming down through a sleeper
Three in the morning near nottam
And there 'tween the curtains — I remember
quite certain
Was some beautiful lady's bare bottom

So, I took my brightest red lantern
And I hung it with steady right hand
O'er the fairest behind that ever stirred a man's mind
As we rumbled on over the land."

The Super's voice was a study
As he played with a weight on his table
"Your own explanation is to me a temptation
To hand you all that I'm able."

The brakeman reached for his rule book
And he thumbed up page after page
So at last when he stopped you could hear a pin drop
And he spoke with a voice of a sage

"Rule thirteen says expressly
'When heading out into the night
Where a rear end is exposed not in motion or hosed
By all means hang a red light'."

WEWing.

TRANSPORTATION

via

ROUND HOUSE

Uncanny hollows of silence
Roaring tornadoes of sound
Where the rats run over the pinch bars
Where the smoke and cinders abound

Power — vast and mysterious
Re-inforced on loyalty's base
Submerging the petty and useless
Cursed with efficiency's pace

As a woman who's charming and pretty
Holds our hearts to no gain
Transportation in all of its phases
Attracts and holds her domain

PAY DAY

Every time father gets a pay check
Mother has a fit
She imagines he is drunk or dying
Or has spent the most of it.

AUTHORITY

An important looking bastard
Came strutting down the walk
For all the world resembling
An inflated turkey cock

He stared at me — disgusted
As a person sometimes will
At a hair discovered in one's soup
Or, an inverted pail of swill

As he turned in at the tavern
In a cultured sort of way
I wondered about us common folk
Who only think and work and play.

In as much as my meagre railroad knowledge is confined to my twenty-five years service with my employer, the Northern Pacific Railroad, I feel that it is not improper that I dedicate the next two poems — or rhymes to that corporation.

YELLOWSTONE

Come, you tired-out workers
And you that are blase and bored
To the shadows of peaks where the Creator now speaks
Where the treasures of Nature are stored.

The Tetons to the south rise in grandeur.
The Absourkas form the east wall.
While Gallatin's range to north does not change
Through the seasons from winter to fall.

Come, meet your four-footed friends of the forest,
Meet the fish that play in the streams
From the great grizzly bears to the timid white hares
Not to speak of the eagles that scream.

The wide-eyed deer in the meadow,
The buffalo herd on the plain.
The black bears and their cubs the flowers and shrubs
All links in this vast natural chain.

The pines rising straight to the highest
The thick carpet of needles below.
The pools like great pearls, the scamper of squirreis
And the mountain tops covered with snow.

The actual glass mountain that sparkles
The palisades and fluted grey rocks
The wide oily roads, the ranger's abodes
And the artists who sketch in white smocks.

The rainbow collection of colors
Displayed by geysers and pools
The rumble and thunder as of rocks torn asunder
And the hot springs that shimmer like jewels.

The Canyon — that zenith of colorful wonder
Holds you breathless — speechless — in awe.
That hole in the ground without distance or sound
With its colors that upset every law.

The purples that change in the sunshine
The yellows — the reds and the blues
The ochre-touched tints and the silver-like glints
And a million or so other hues.

The Chittendon bridge in the background
The power and roar of the falls
And Yellowstone Lake and the fish you can take
All memories I like to recall.

THE LOCAL

Out of the dust-covered station
As the twilight is stretching its pall.
The click and clack of the switches
As the hogger starts hitting the ball.

The musical clang at the crossings,
The roar of increasing speed,
The cold draft from some wide-open doorway
Left by some guy who's gone in to feed.

Coats swinging out from the windows
Hats on the rack up above,
The old man who snores in the corner.
The couple that always makes love.

The acid smell of bananas
The kids who run for a drink
A hundred creaks and odd noises
Coming up from rusty chain links

The lights that sway down the middle
The slam of a door here and there
The smart lad with a half a good snoot full
The lady with tousled blonde hair.

The news hawk with papers and candy
Lurching down through the aisle
The porter dashing in from the Pullman
The lights that punctuate miles

The drummer up in the smoker
With his samples of cheap fire water
His noisy laugh like a dying calf
And his tales of the farmer's daughter

The dead heads who kid the conductor
To show they are regular rails
The farmer who sleeps with his hat on
The old woman with berries in pails

The memories that glimmer and linger
As I peer out through the onrushing night
The whistle chimes in at the crossing
There's home — the same welcome sight.

THE FABLE OF THE MAN WHO WAS TOO OLD TO WORK AND TOO YOUNG TO QUIT

Once upon a time there was an employee of a Railroad Company who was what you might call a veteran.

The years had bowed his head, bent his back, soured his disposition and increased his dislike for all his fellow members of the human race.

He was about as friendly as a timber wolf, as neighborly as a hyena and as greedy as a cat with kittens.

His great undying ambition was to assure himself that none of these modern young whipper snappers would ever live long enough to get his job.

To those who somewhat fearfully suggested that he take the pension he had been for sometime entitled to, he would rejoin, "I'm only sixty-nine." To others he would answer, "I can't live on what they are going to give me."

One day this old man had an interruption in his carefully planned schedule — he died.

Now as you walk through the place he used to work and growl you can hear them say, "Do you remember the name of that old goat that used to work in such and such a spot?" But no one remembers.

Moral — It's later than you think!

NUMBER ONE

THE NORTH COAST LIMITED

From the banks of the Father of Waters
To the farthest mountain peaks
I glide my way by night and by day
And through me my company speaks

To the public of matchless service
And tireless efforts to please
Safety with a courteous gesture
From worry and care sure surcease

From the back shops down on the Schuylkill
To the yards on Columbia's shores
They pick the steels for my driving wheels
And they draw on the pick of their stores

From the finest tomatoes in York state
To the spuds on Idaho's flats
The food for my cars is culled from the stars
And is relished by even high-hats

My schedule is sacred and final
From Chicago to Seattle's last light
And they go in the hole without water or coal
When my signal shakes the black night

So, ride your tin lizzie or blue bus
Walk — if you like it that way
But, your trip to the coast and I don't want to boast
Must be first class if you want it to pay.

EEWing.

NORTH WOODS

Silver birch
Silent pine
Abandoned camp
Deserted mine
Dim blazed trail
Waterfall
Aged cliff
Blue jay's call
Ice-marked rocks
Cedar swamp
Beaver dam
Hunting camp
Overall
Heavy smell
Needles fresh
Off pines in dell
Afternoon
In Northland Woods
Beauty deep
Entrancing moods

Soft green moss
River's bend
Wild Flowers shy
Fragrance send
Seeming answer
To silent prayer
God answers
'I'm here — I'm there
Fir-clad hills
Birch-decked dells
Contain altars
Fairy bells
Forgotten lives
Useless hopes
Wasted tears
Souls that grope
Come to life
In Northland Woods
Where air is clear
With Nature's moods.

WEWing.

THE NIGHT GANG

Confusion of brightness and shadows
Bedlam of Whistles and bells,
Strange mixture of friendships and grouches
Peculiar sensations and smells.

First we go up high on a boiler
We're up with the sparrows and bats,
We're down in the pit in the darkness
Surrounded by roaches and rats.

We freeze our feet on the outside
We burn our paws in hot cabs,
We splash our feet in the puddles
Of water and oil like great crabs.

We love to fix up machinery
That's always falling apart,
We've only a hammer and chisel
It's enough because we're so smart.

When they shoot us the lemons from Staples
When the crates roll in from back shop,
When inspections cover four pages
When the goats come in without stop.

When a hogger who gets in his mileage
Asleep on a crossing downtown,
Reports everything loose on the engine
And wants both his back ends taken down.

When a hostler finds defects and lights out
And reports them twice every hour,
A man tries to hang on to his patience
But his temper is apt to get sour.

But the night gang is able to take it
We even get fat on abuse,
We even feel sorry for the day guys
And the lads who ride the caboose.

THE FOREMAN'S DREAM

There were fourteen on the blower
And two more on the rack,
When a failure was reported
And a hostler broke a jack.

A helper got his hand hurt
A machinist broke a drill.
The dispatcher wanted helpers,
For a turn upon the hill.

The F E was coming in the doorway
With a red card in his hand,
The phone was ringing loudly
There was trouble with the sand.

The old man was walking heavy
On his good old rubber heels,
When the Four spot came upon the pit
With a rotten pair of wheels.

There was whistling at the coal dock
There was a-ringing in the yard,
Where some ivory-headed switchman
Had upset a car of lard.

The store was out of everything
Of the slightest bit of use,
While Slippery Jim reported
His headlight had no juice.

The boss was getting ready
To jump right out the door,
He'd had grief coming heavy
And it looked like more and more.

When he heard his wife a-calling
'For God's sake get up and eat,
You railroad-railroad-railroad
Even in your sleep.'

BIG HOOK THE WRECKER

I'm peculiar, ponderous and powerful
I'm relentless as the passage of time
I rumble in with my clanking din,
And I speedily clear up the line.

When floods are raging the lowlands,
And the tracks are buried in mud
I splash my way by the night or the day,
And I spare neither flesh nor their blood.

When temperatures hit below zero,
And the highlands are buried in snow
When hogs are disabled and winded,
I know that it's time to go.

When storms are hitting the main line,
When signals are hard to make out
I sit and I scheme with a full head of steam
Awaiting the call of my route.

The box cars that disdainfully pass me,
As I sit on my siding alone
Have nothing on earth to get smart at,
For some time I'll carry them home.

The giants that pull the great mail trains
Amuse me with their air of contempt,
I've seen them hell-west and crooked
Covered with mud and unkempt.

My job is to save up my power
Till the nights they announce a new wreck,
But the airs that they pull in nice weather,
Sure give me a pain in the neck.

THE VOICE OF THE LOCOMOTIVE

We're the sparks of a nation's advancement
As eastward and westward we come
On our straight iron trail—with United States mail
Express—frozen fish—lard and gum.

Our lights split the dim air of twilight
The roar of our trucks shakes the dawn
We pause in the hot sun of noon-tide
With a rattle and roar—we are gone.

The executive ponders our welfare
Labor guides us o'er mountain and plain
The public depends on our power
Through blizzard, flood, fire and rain.

From the nuts on our dynamo's base iron
To the keys in our grease cellar pins
We mean time, man-power and money
And we pay for the bond-holder's sins.

Some men spend their lives at our throttles
Others cough out their lives in the pits
They feed us coal, crude oil or live juice
As designers go into new fits.

We're the triumph of mechanical power
Assortments of wood, iron and steel,
Consumer of coal, tools and water
We're trouble from boiler to wheels.

We visit the town and the hamlet
We're disturbers of cities fond of peace
We're the hubs of a great system's clockwork
Hungry for oil, waste and grease.

So—when you're riding the cushions
And watching the landscape roll by
As you light your two-bit perfecto
And satisfaction fills up your eye.

When you drink up the thirty-cent cocktail
That the waiter puts in your hand
Drink a toast to the faithful old engine
That's pulling you safe 'cross the land.

P. S.

And when our days on the main line are ended
And we're jerked like some one's loose tooth
Let us die in some comfortable bone yard
But don't send us up to Duluth.—W. E. Wing.

BOILERMAKERS

Extract the brains from an idot
Fireproof his feet
File down his ears, quiet his fears
And give him an ounce of conceit.

Brick arch, arch flues, stay bolts.
Mud rings and flexible caps,
He's right on the job — the ignorant slob
As with gun and hammer he taps.

But a hot job is always a hot job
And dead work is nobody's snap
But the gang with their plugs, their snuff
and their jugs
Are the toughest you'll find on the map.

THE MIDNIGHT

A touch or two on the throttle
A shot of sand on the rail
Sixty-five is pitching sideways
And we're right on time with the mail.

Over the hill into Carlton
Be sure and remember the air
A bump or two at the crossing
And you'll have the brass hats in your hair.

A minute behind at Barnum
On time for the lights of Moose Lake
There's a freezer waiting at Sturgeon
I'll get my orders from Jake.

Sixty-six is waiting at Hinckley
With water and coal to take on
Our orders at Rutledge are as usual
The track is clear to Beroun.

The yellow is streaking the sky-line
When I put on the gun at the branch
My partner is new to night firing
But I'll have to give him a chance.

We're rolling ahead at Wyoming
We lose again at White Bear
Our relief is waiting at Union
He'll take her to Mick town from there.

North Branch, Wyoming and White Bear
We take them all in our stride
Not to speak of a thousand old milk cans
And a bundle or two of dried hides.

But listen to Stanley, the Polak
Who fired this run for a time
'I'd sooner spend eight hours on the midnite
Than any old job on the line.

Twenty-one years on the midnite
Twenty-one ton to the run
Hand-fired—through all kinds of weather
And I feel that I've just begun.

I've kept her hot on the mainline
I've steamed up the old lady at home
For every year on the blackboard
I've a kid that's anxious to roam.

For the Gods of the railroads smile brightest
On the men who've really been there
The ones with the scars on their bodies
The ones with grey in their hair.'

LABORER'S IDEA OF AN EXECUTIVE

You ooze with efficient, cold-blooded figures
You drip with executive guile,
If some one mentions 'more labor'
You chase the poor guy a mile.

You organize railroads and chain stores
You pick up loose ends for banks,
You lay off everyone you can think of
For this you sure earn our thanks.

When death claims you—you dirty old rascal
I'll bet a dime against a brass bell,
You'll be busy as time in the hereafter
You'll consolidate Heaven and Hell.

A BOX CAR

Unit of transportation
Home of the hobo and bum
Conveyor of Bibles and onions
Miscellaneous freight and rum.

How many miles have you traveled?
How many leagues have you rolled?
Since the first brakie high-balled the head-end
Since the first crossing bell has tolled.

The cities you've seen in your travels
The towns you've stood idly in
The villages where you've loaded potatoes
The profits you've helped to win.

The snows of how many winters
Have covered your roof all in white
The hot sun of how many summers
Have your sides reflected in light.

When modernized transportation
Discards locomotives and coal
There will still be one institution
That will yet be a part of the whole.

When machinists, laborers and firemen
Will at last be a thing of the past
When the old heads go on pensions
And the busses are waiting to be gassed.

We'll still have hoggers and sand domes
We'll still have hot boxes and bars
But the things that will be with us longest
Will be our old pals—the box cars.

SAFETY FIRST

In the good old days of railroads
When you had to be most tough
To go firing or switching,
And you carried plug—not snuff.

When a boomer with five fingers
Was a most unusual sight;
When a hogger balked at fifty cars
And the crew was always tight.

When Old Crow was a dollar
And a lunch with every beer;
When sixteen hours was daily
And we laid off once a year.

When conductors hired brakemen
Fresh—right off the farm,
Before the days of mallets
The public viewed with some alarm.

A railway crew on pay day
Wrecking bars and cursing high,
And costs for deaths and fractures
Had almost hit the sky.

But those days are gone forever
And today we use our heads,
When coupling up the drawbars
For we are no use when dead.

You even see machinists
Without a scratch or scar,
And any rail who hits the ball
Can drive some kind of car.

And we hope the public sees us
In a more advantageous light,
Producing wholesome service
Any time of day or night.

YES YES

The weeds are glogging the switches
The rust is covering the rails
The trucks are blocking the highways
The air ships are grabbing the mails.

The stations are empty and silent
The roofs moss-covered and loose
Homes for the mice and the woodchucks
The railroads have gone to the deuce.

So vote some more miles of highway
Raise up every nice little tax
Make everything nice for the busses
Put the tax burden on your own backs.

It's comfortable riding the highway
With your rear frozen tight to a seat
Just relax in your straight-jacket bus coop
But try to find room for your feet.

Don't worry about the trip to the rest room
Just hold it about sixty miles
If you make it just think of the pleasure
You can get from a good case of piles.

But they tell us we're hitting the highway
To civilized pleasure's advance
But the taxes are getting prodigous
Not to speak of the shine on my pants.

ECONOMY BILL

The gang from the roundhouse had gathered
To pay their respects to the boss
He'd lived his life—fought with his wife
And soon would be covered with moss.

The preacher was all done telling
Of the fine place where Bill had gone
And we sat in a line with our shoes fresh shined
As the pall bearers stood up alone.

We hurried out to the graveyard
As fast as the Packard could roll
And far up ahead dressed up but dead
Was the man who'd saved wages and coal.

We finally stopped at the edge of a grave
And respectfully bared our heads
As the door of the hearse like an ancient curse
Opened to deliver the dead.

The boys grabbed hold of the handles
And started up to the grave
When something happened to startle the timid
And wring hot tears from the brave.

The boss sat up in the coffin
And sternly looked at the crowd
'Oh, what have you spent for flowers?
How much is the director allowed?

I see there's six of you carrying me onward
Where four would have been enough
Lay off the two in the middle
Put the others on four days—that's the stuff.

AT THE END

Now that you have been kind enough to read my little book allow me to explain that it was not written with the desire to present literary ability but in a simple manner to bring to some of my friends the stories that I see all around me as enacted by fellow workers and machinery with which we come in contact.

This business of railroading of which we who are employed in the roundhouse play our small part is to me most interesting and if I have been able to present it to you in turn with that result I am glad.

It is difficult to do a thing that will be satisfactory to every one so if I have given offense to anyone or have been guilty of some inaccuracy I trust you will overlook it and read my verse in the spirit in which it was written.

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